

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/RA:MGELNER:JG
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S/S
EA-MR. OAKLEY

-----101743 190457Z /14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 250231

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PPDC, PORC, AS

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S REPLY TO FRASER'S LETTER ON ILO

1. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS SIGNED A REPLY DATED OCTOBER 15
TO PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S LETTER TRANSMITTED BY AMBASSADOR
RENOUF SEPTEMBER 27 CONCERNING US MEMBERSHIP IN THE ILO.
THE ORIGINAL LETTER HAS BEEN HAND-DELIVERED TO THE AUS-
TRALIAN EMBASSY HERE, AND A COPY IS BEING POUCHED TO
POST. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, THE TEXT OF THE LETTERS
FOLLOWS:

2. PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER:

"DEAR MALCOLM:

"THANK YOU FOR SHARING WITH ME YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE
FUTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION. I VALUE
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YOUR VIEWS AND WILL CERTAINLY TAKE THEM INTO CONSIDERA-
TION IN MAKING MY DECISION ON CONTINUED U.S. MEMBERSHIP
IN THE ILO.

"I ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
SUCH AS THE ILO, WHICH HAVE AS THEIR PRINCIPAL GOALS THE

FURTHERING OF WORLD PEACE AND EQUITABLE AND HUMANE TREATMENT FOR ALL PEOPLES. THE U.S. HAS MADE A SPECIAL EFFORT IN RECENT YEARS, PARTICULARLY SINCE 1975, TO BRING ABOUT CONSTRUCTIVE AND NEEDED REFORMS COMPATIBLE WITH THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE ILO WAS FOUNDED. I KNOW THAT AUSTRALIA SHARES OUR GOALS FOR THE ILO AND HAS WORKED HARD FOR NEEDED REFORMS IN IT. BUT THE LACK OF SUPPORT FROM OTHER MEMBERS ON ISSUES WHICH WE CONSIDER VITAL TO THE ORGANIZATION'S FUTURE HAS BEEN DISAPPOINTING TO US.

"YOU CAN BE CERTAIN THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WILL THOROUGHLY REVIEW ALL OF THE FACTORS INVOLVED BEFORE MAKING A DECISION ON OUR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE ILO. THE ASSESSMENT WILL INCLUDE THE FULL TWO-YEAR RECORD OF THE EFFORTS TO REFORM THE ILO, THE VIEWS OF THIS GOVERNMENT'S FRIENDS AND ALLIES, THE VALUE OF THE WORK OF THE ILO, AND THE EFFECT OF THE UNITED STATES DECISION ON OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

"I AM PLEASED THAT YOU SHARED YOUR CONCERNS AND INSIGHTS WITH ME ABOUT THIS DIFFICULT DECISION.

"SINCERELY,

"JIMMY CARTER"

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3. PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S LETTER:

"MR. PRESIDENT,

"OVER RECENT MONTHS, I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING WITH CLOSE INTEREST AND CONSIDERABLE CONCERN THE DEBATE WITHIN THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONALLY ON THE FUTURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION.

"GIVEN THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE ILO, AND THE VALUE WHICH AUSTRALIA, AS A FOUNDATION MEMBER, ATTACHES TO THE ORGANIZATION'S WORK, I FEEL THAT I SHOULD CONVEY PERSONALLY TO YOU THE AUSTRALIAN VIEW OF THE PRESENT SITUATION.

"LIKE THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRALIA IS CONCERNED BY THE PROBLEMS FACING THE ILO AND BY THE RESULTANT ATMOSPHERE OF CONFRONTATION WHICH HAS COME INCREASINGLY TO PERVADE THE ORGANIZATION'S COUNCILS IN RECENT YEARS. THE FAILURE OF THE 1977 INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE TO ADOPT THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS WAS IN ITSELF A MAJOR SETBACK FOR THE OR-

GANIZATION'S WORK. ALONG WITH OTHER LIKEMINDED NATIONS,

HOWEVER, AUSTRALIA WILL ENDEAVOR TO ENSURE THAT THE MAIN POINTS OF THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT CONTINUE TO BE PURSUED WITHIN THE ILO.

"SIMILARLY, WE BELIEVE THAT THE QUESTION OF MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHENING REGARD FOR DUE PROCESS IS ONE WHICH DEMANDS OUR CLOSE AND CONTINUING ATTENTION. BOTH THIS ISSUE AND THAT OF GENERAL STRUCTURAL REFORM IN THE ILO ARE PROBLEMS WHICH CANNOT BE SOLVED AT ONE STROKE, BUT WILL DEMAND EARNEST AND CONTINUING EFFORT ON THE PART OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE ILO BEFORE THEY CAN BE RESOLVED. THEIR SUCCESSFUL SOLUTION WOULD, IN OUR VIEW, CONTRIBUTE

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SIGNIFICANTLY TO DEFUSING A GREAT DEAL OF THE POLITICAL TENSION IN THE ORGANISATION AND THUS ASSIST US IN OUR EFFORTS TO CONCENTRATE ON AND STRENGTHEN THE SUBSTANTIVE WORK OF THE ILO.

"THE UNITED STATES HAS, SINCE 1934, PLAYED A LEADING AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ILO - AS IT HAS DONE MORE RECENTLY IN DEFINING THE PROBLEMS FACING THE ORGANISATION. IF THE UNITED STATES DECIDED TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ILO, THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF THE ORGANISATION WOULD BE CALLED INTO QUESTION.

"I BELIEVE THAT, IF THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRALIA AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ILO ARE PREPARED TO WORK TOGETHER, TO BE FLEXIBLE AND PATIENT IN THEIR APPROACH AND TO ENCOURAGE DIALOGUE AND DISCUSSION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION, THE PROBLEMS WHICH NOW CONFRONT US CAN BE SOLVED. I BELIEVE THAT BECAUSE OF ITS SOLID RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ITS UNIQUE TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE, THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION IS WORTHY OF THE EFFORT. I KNOW THAT THE UNITED STATES, LIKE AUSTRALIA, BELIEVES IMPLICITLY IN THE NEED FOR A MULTILATERAL APPROACH TO THE COMPLEXITY OF WORLD ISSUES TODAY. THE ILO IS AN INTEGRAL AND VITAL PART OF THE EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS WHICH WE HAVE ALL WORKED SO HARD TO ESTABLISH OVER THE LAST 50 YEARS. A FAILURE TO MEET THE PRESENT CHALLENGE IN THE ILO WOULD HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM.

"I WOULD THEREFORE URGE YOU TO WITHDRAW THE NOTICE OF INTENT, OR, FAILING THIS, AT LEAST TO EXTEND IT FOR A PERIOD WHICH WOULD INCLUDE NEXT YEAR'S CONFERENCE, TO

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ENABLE FULL UNITED STATES PARTICIPATION IN THIS CRITICAL
PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF THE ILO.
MALCOLM FRASER." VANCE

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